

A Clean Energy Future for Our State

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By Representative Mike Michaud

From 2001 to 2007, the average family's annual spending on oil, gas and electricity increased by \$1,100. At the same time we were all paying more, Big Oil posted the largest profits in the history of American business. We cannot stand for more of the same failed policies of the last few decades, where prices go up, consumers suffer, and only big business benefits. The status quo is unacceptable and is costing all of us a lot.

On June 26, 2009, the House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act. This landmark bill will take us in a new direction and finally invest in clean, domestic energy production. The bill will jump start the national economy by creating millions of new clean energy jobs, increase national security by reducing dependence on foreign oil, and preserve the planet by reducing the pollution that causes global warming.

Maine has been a leader in the promotion of clean energy. And because of this, the House-passed bill is a boon to our state in a number of important ways.

While the federal government was stuck in neutral on the issue of promoting a clean energy future, Maine and other states moved forward and created the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). ACES builds upon this initiative by bringing other areas of the country to where Maine already is, while at the same time promoting the development of clean, renewable sources of energy. And because Maine participated in the regional greenhouse gas initiative, we'll be way ahead. ACES would provide Maine over \$240 million in allowances during the period of 2012 to 2017, in place of the \$60 million that the state would have collected under RGGI. This \$240 million would be used to directly invest in our state's clean energy infrastructure. These investments would create jobs, support local businesses and promote energy efficiencies that would save Mainers money.

According to recent studies, for every \$1 million in clean energy investments there are 16.7 jobs created. According to a recent report on ACES issued by the University of Massachusetts and the Center for American Progress, Maine could see a net increase of about \$600 million in investment revenue and 10,000 jobs based on its share of a total of \$150 billion in clean-energy investments annually across the country.

In addition to these valuable investments in our state, I was pleased that the House passed an amendment to the bill that I pushed that will improve the bill and make it even better for Maine. The amendment makes sure that biomass power producers, including Maine's pulp and paper facilities, will be recognized for their production of renewable energy. This could mean an expansion of this locally produced clean energy sector and the creation of new jobs. The more utilities rely on renewable power in the future, the more this source of energy will be in demand in the coming years. This will help put Maine and other similarly situated states in a good position to benefit from a clean energy transition.

Each year, U.S. forests and forest products capture and store 10 percent of all U.S. carbon emissions — a critical contribution toward mitigating climate change. More than 250,000 Maine families and individuals are small forest landowners and they collectively own more than 6.2 million acres, the largest share of our state's forests. Many of these landowners engage in sustainable forestry practices that not only keep our forests healthy, but also contribute to reductions in greenhouse gases.

Under ACES, sustainable agricultural practices and projects will be eligible for credits, which companies who pollute will need to purchase to offset their emissions. I was pleased that during a colloquy on the House floor that I was able to

work with congressional leaders to clarify that these practices will include sustainable forestry. Because of this, the congressional intent is clear that Maine's small forest landowners will be part of our clean energy future.

The United States can't afford to fall behind other countries in the development of clean energy. We need to pass ACES into law so that America, and not China, becomes the leader in new energy technologies that will create millions of new jobs and be needed worldwide. A comprehensive energy bill will unleash investments in new clean energy technologies that can be manufactured here in America, used to reduce our pollution, and exported to nations like China and India.

Right now in the state of Maine, we are conducting groundbreaking research and working on tidal energy and wind power. And we're making serious strides towards massive offshore wind power development. This legislation will help our state get ahead by promoting the incentives to move our country forward towards a clean energy future.